General Election & Presidential Election Vote Intention Opinion Poll

September 2018

Methodology and Weighting
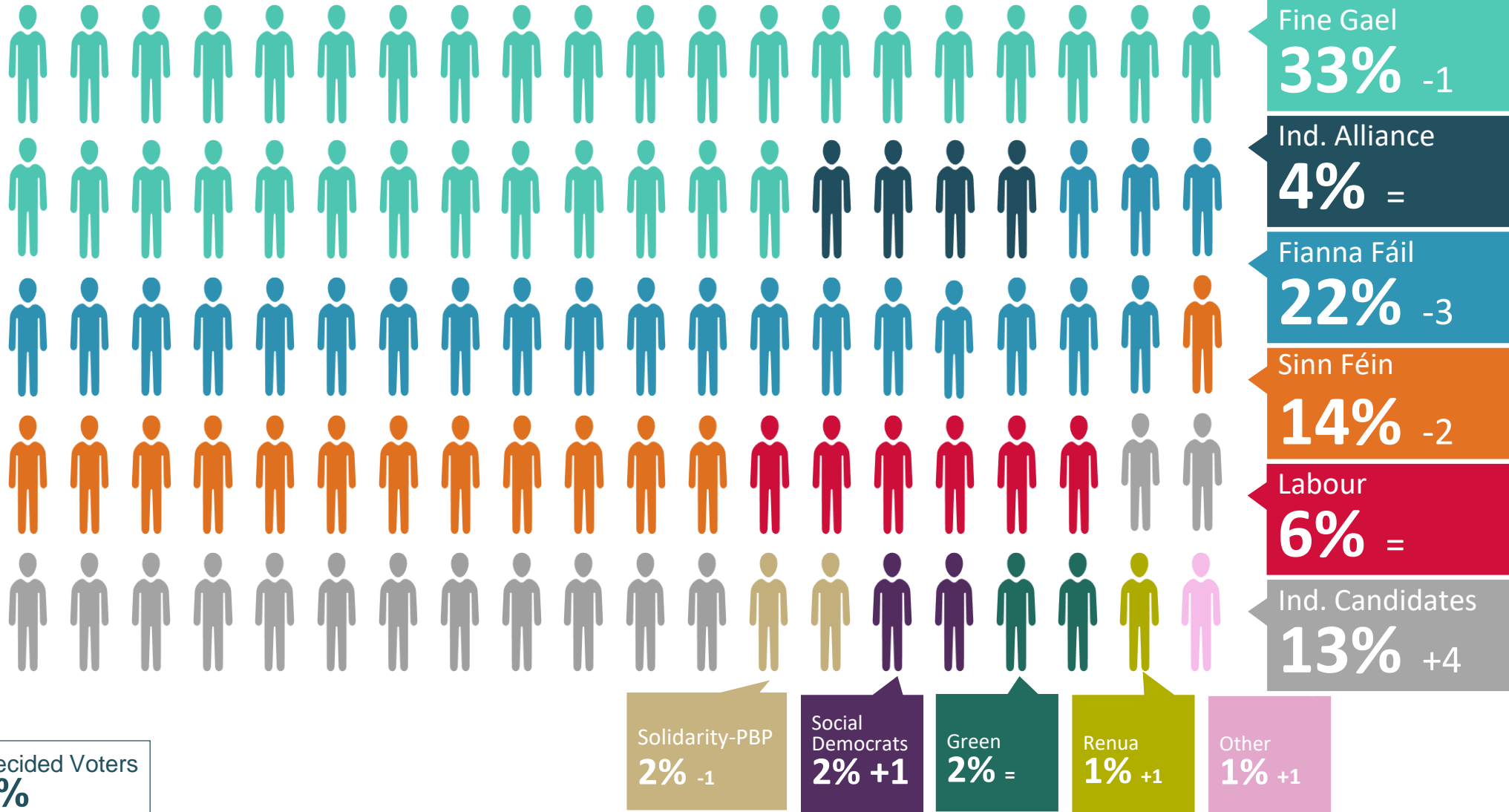
/ RED C interviewed a random sample of 1000 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 6th-13th September 2018.

/ 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, compares this to the actual results and weights the data between the two.

/ Vote intention results are weighted based on turnout, including both how likely each respondent is to actually go and vote on a 10 point scale, where 1 is not at all likely and 10 is very likely, as well as whether or not they voted in the last general election.

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

First Preference Vote Intention – 16th September 2018

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
33% -1

Ind. Alliance
4% =

Fianna Fáil
22% -3

Sinn Féin
14% -2

Labour
6% =

Ind. Candidates
13% +4

Solidarity-PBP
2% -1

Social Democrats
2% +1

Green
2% =

Renua
1% +1

Other
1% +1

Undecided Voters
11%

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First Preference Vote Intention – September '18

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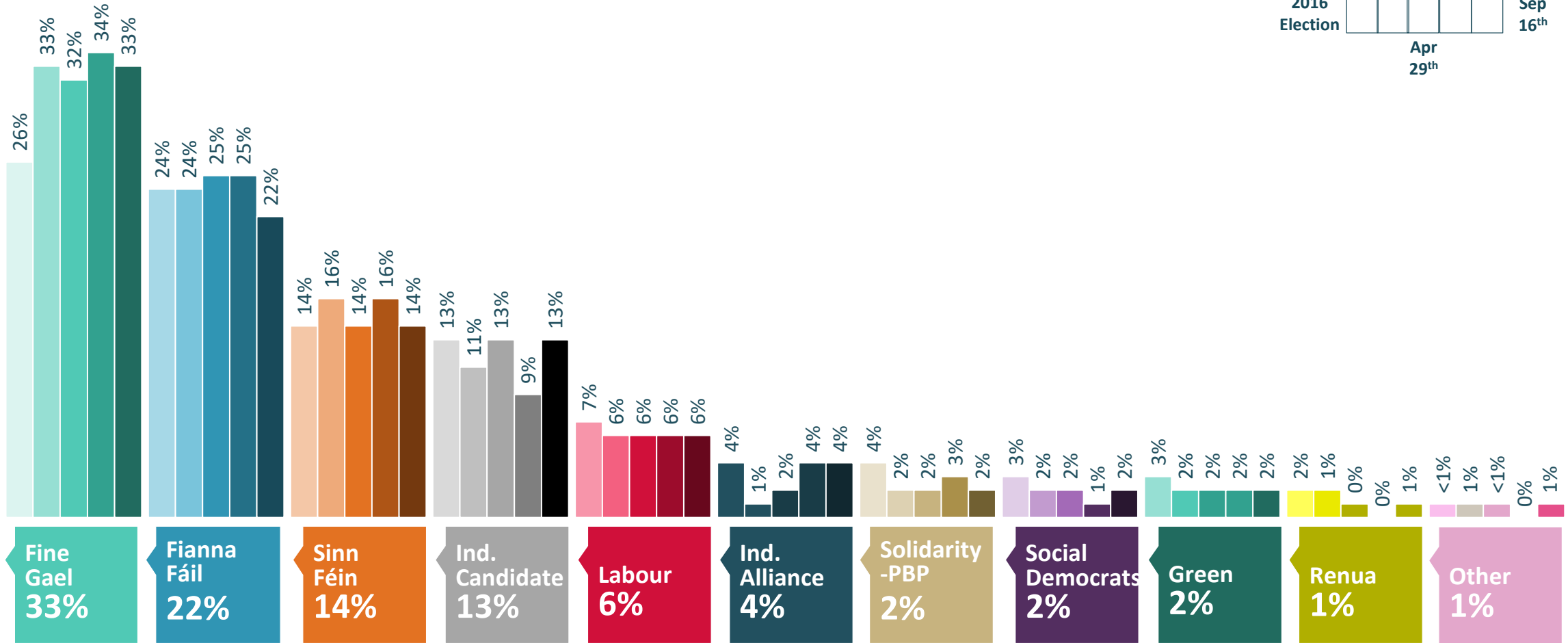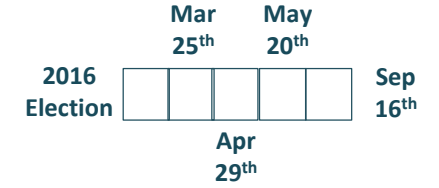
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)

Timeline labels: 2016 Election | Mar 25th | Apr 29th | May 20th | Sep 16th

Fine Gael: 26%, 33%, 32%, 34%, 33%
Fianna Fáil: 24%, 24%, 25%, 25%, 22%
Sinn Féin: 14%, 16%, 14%, 16%, 14%
Ind. Candidate: 13%, 11%, 13%, 9%, 13%
Labour: 7%, 6%, 6%, 6%, 6%
Ind. Alliance: 4%, 1%, 2%, 4%, 4%
Solidarity-PBP: 4%, 2%, 2%, 3%, 2%
Social Democrats: 3%, 2%, 2%, 1%, 2%
Green: 3%, 2%, 2%, 2%, 2%
Renua: 2%, 1%, 0%, 0%, 1%
Other: <1%, 1%, <1%, 0%, 1%

| Fine Gael 33% | Fianna Fáil 22% | Sinn Féin 14% | Ind. Candidate 13% | Labour 6% | Ind. Alliance 4% | Solidarity-PBP 2% | Social Democrats 2% | Green 2% | Renua 1% | Other 1% |

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First Preference Vote Intention – Since GE 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)
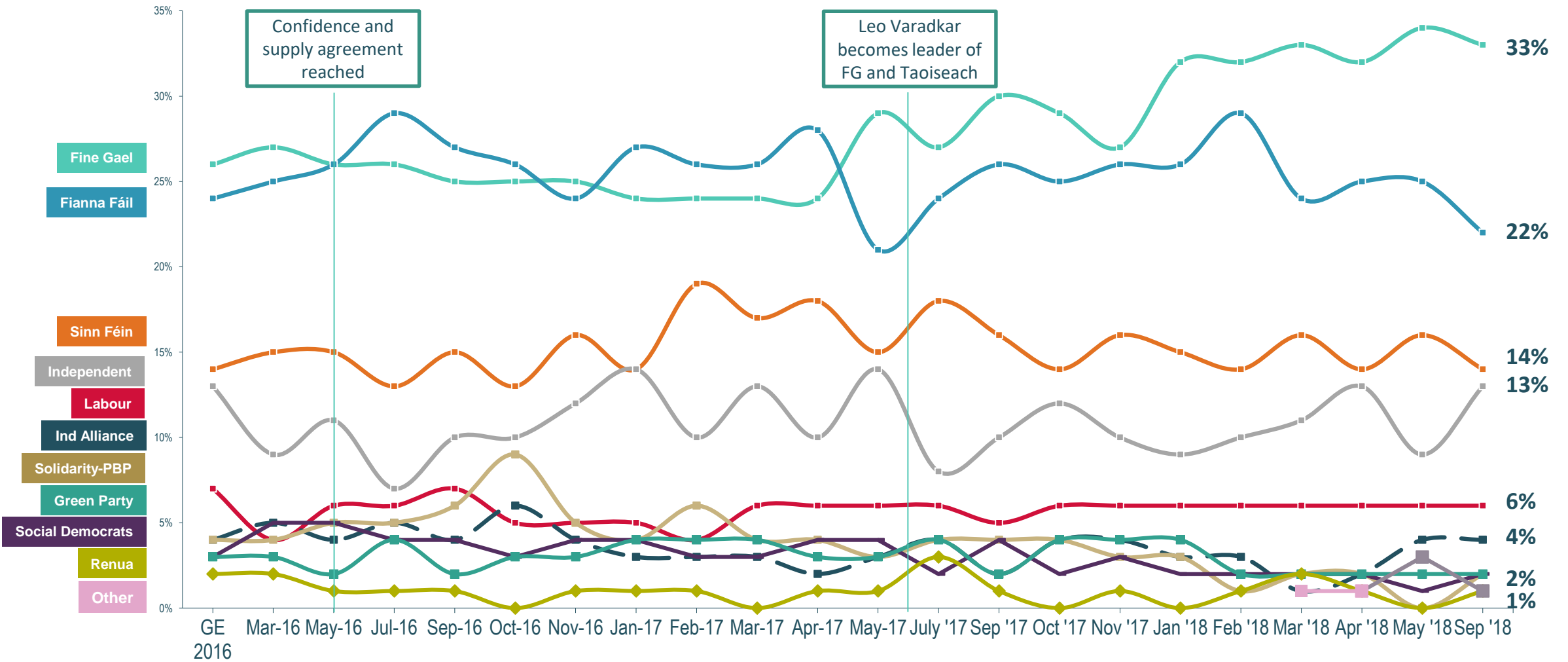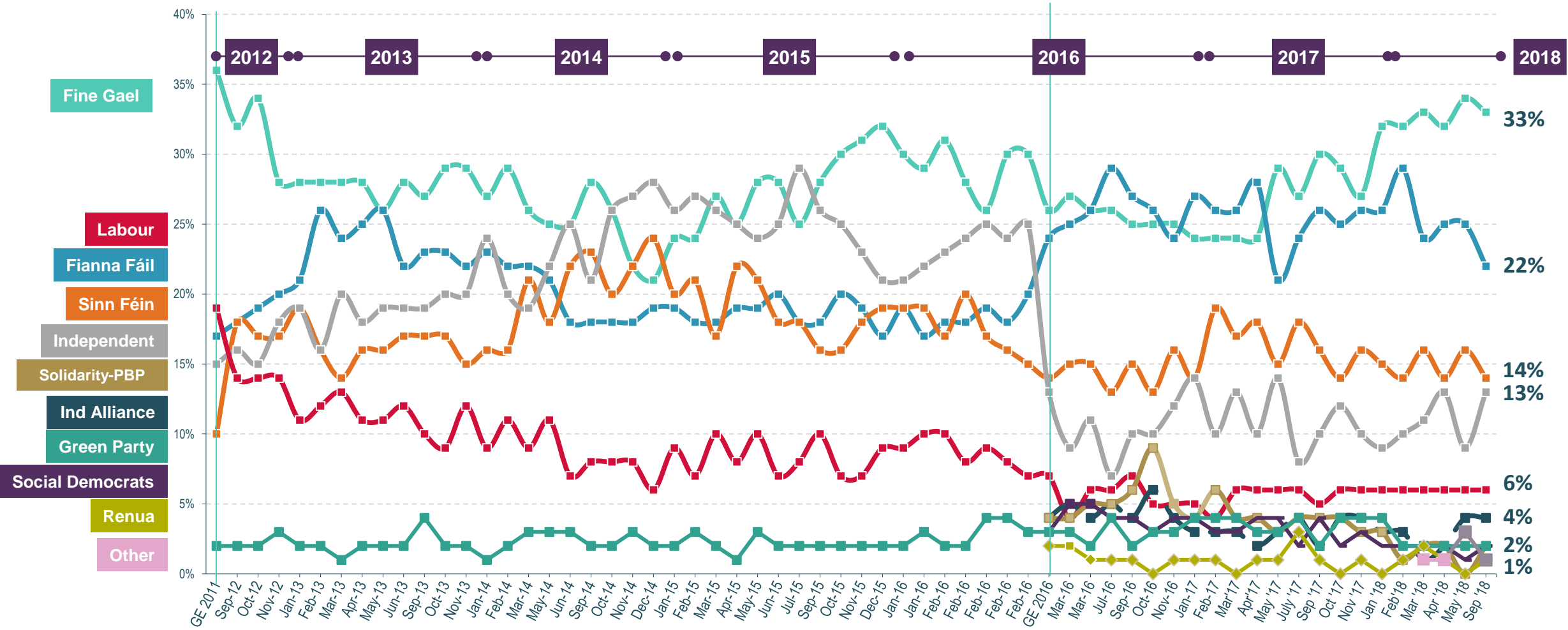
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)

First Preference Vote Intention – 2012-2018

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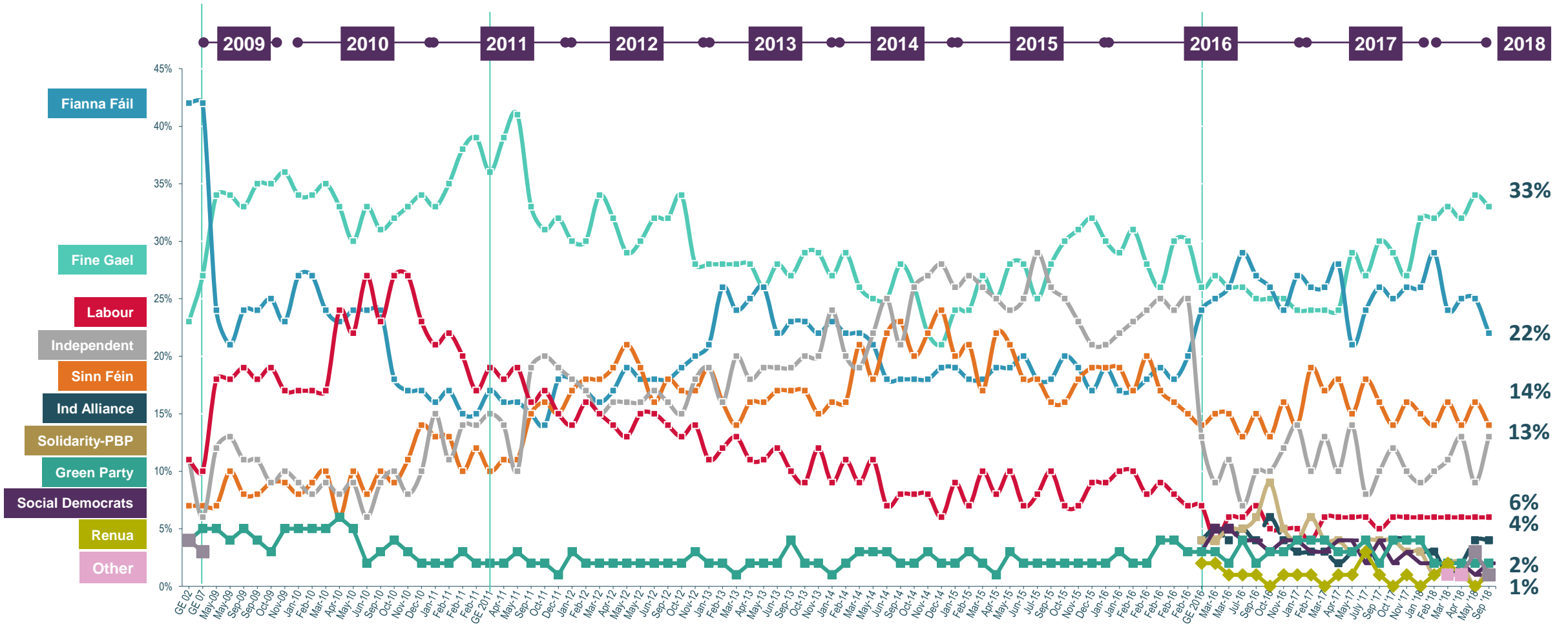
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)

Note; *From GE 2016 Onwards, 'Independents/Others' split out to show Solidarity-PBP, Social Democrats & Renua separately*
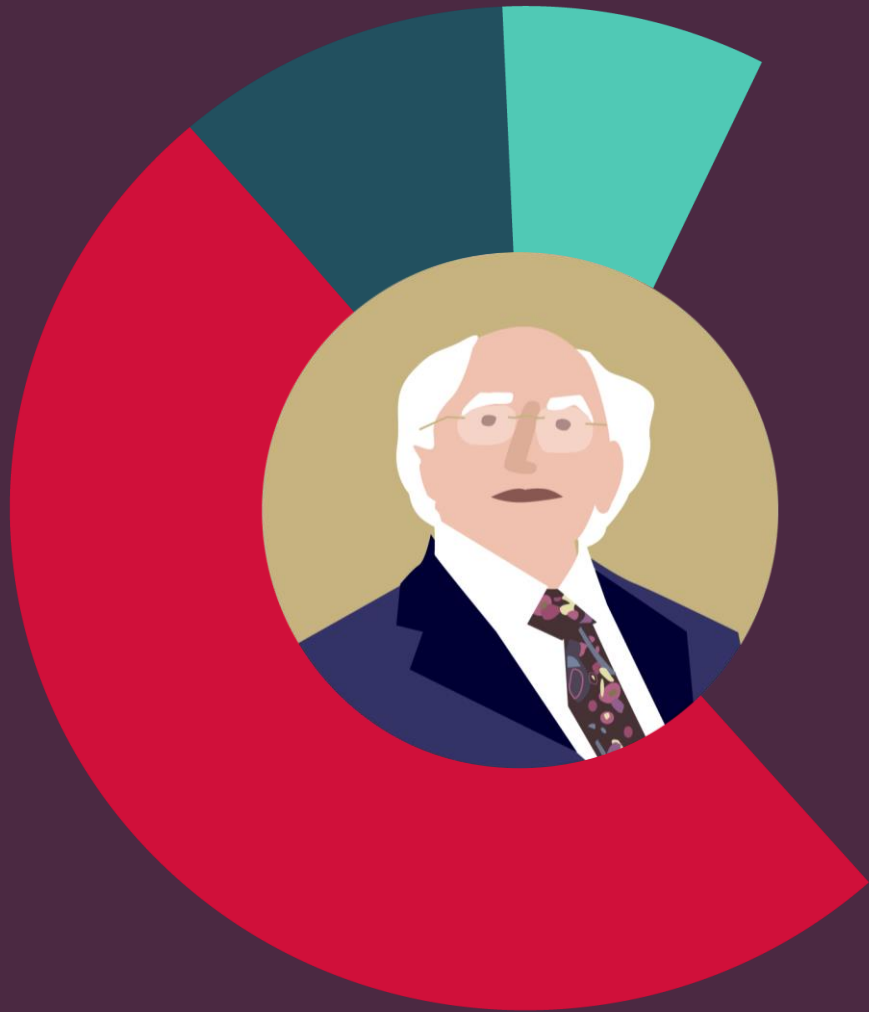
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First Preference Vote Intention – 2009 to 2018

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 Solidarity-PBP, Social Democrats & Renua separately

Presidential Election

Higgins a Pretty Sure Bet

Seven years ago, Michael D Higgins fought and survived what was one of the most vicious political campaigns witnessed. The Presidential Election of 2011 was a bloodbath. Of course, a Presidential Election by its nature is very much about candidates, rather than policies, the campaign inevitably focuses on the personality. In 2011, the media took great delight in tearing into one candidate after another as the campaign progressed, until only two serious contenders remained standing in the week before the election.

In the last 2-3 weeks Sean Gallagher took what looked like an unassailable lead in the polls, conducted both by RED C for this paper and others at the time. He had gained support over that time as other candidates were wiped out by heavy media attention. On the final weekend before polling, Gallagher had a lead of 14% over Higgins, with the poll suggesting that he had 40% of the first preference vote. A week later at the vote itself, the positions had been reversed, with Higgins securing 40% of the vote and Gallagher trailing him at 29%. Based on the last Presidential Election then, it would appear that anything is possible, and huge leads in the polls can be overtaken.

For those competing against incumbent Michael D Higgins, they had better hope so! The results from this early poll on the Presidential Election 2018 suggest any of those challenging Higgins, will need a miracle to overtake him.

For Sean Gallagher, or any of the other nominated candidates, to overtake the incumbent Michael D. Higgins to win this election, it certainly appears that a miracle is required. The poll sees Higgins secure 67% of the vote among those registered and likely to vote in the election in just over a months' time. That is a massive majority of voters, even despite the fact that the campaign proper hasn't begun. It would appear to be a mountain for any of the other candidates to climb. The next closest competitor is Sean Gallagher again, but he secures just 15% of the first preference vote at this stage, some 52% behind Higgins.

More worrying for Sean Gallagher is that we also asked voters which candidates they might consider giving a vote to, in order to understand the potential available for each candidate. At this stage just 20% consider they might vote for him. So even though the final candidate list may differ, the opportunity for him to extend his vote share appears limited at this stage.

For those coming after Gallagher it doesn't get any better. A possible Sinn Fein candidate secures just 7% of the first preference vote. At the time of the poll we didn't know the name of the nominated candidate, and of course this may help their vote share rise. However, the reality is that with 14% vote share in this poll, only just half of all Sinn Fein supporters currently suggest they would vote for a Sinn Fein candidate over Higgins. Which doesn't give much hope for the candidate when they are named.

After that Gavin Duffy gets just 6% of the first preference vote and Joan Freeman secures just 3% in this poll. It is also the case that none of them can take any solace from the consideration measure, which suggests that the room for growth is limited for all.

Based on these figures, surely there is absolutely no chance that Michael D. Higgins can lose this election? Well those looking at the last Presidential Election may suggest that anything is possible. But don't forget that the major flip in support in 2011 was based on an extraordinary series of events. Whatever the rights and wrongs about the events surrounding Sean Gallagher's demise last time around, the 14% shift in support from one candidate to another, was an extraordinary change in support among the public, that many didn't believe could possibly happen.
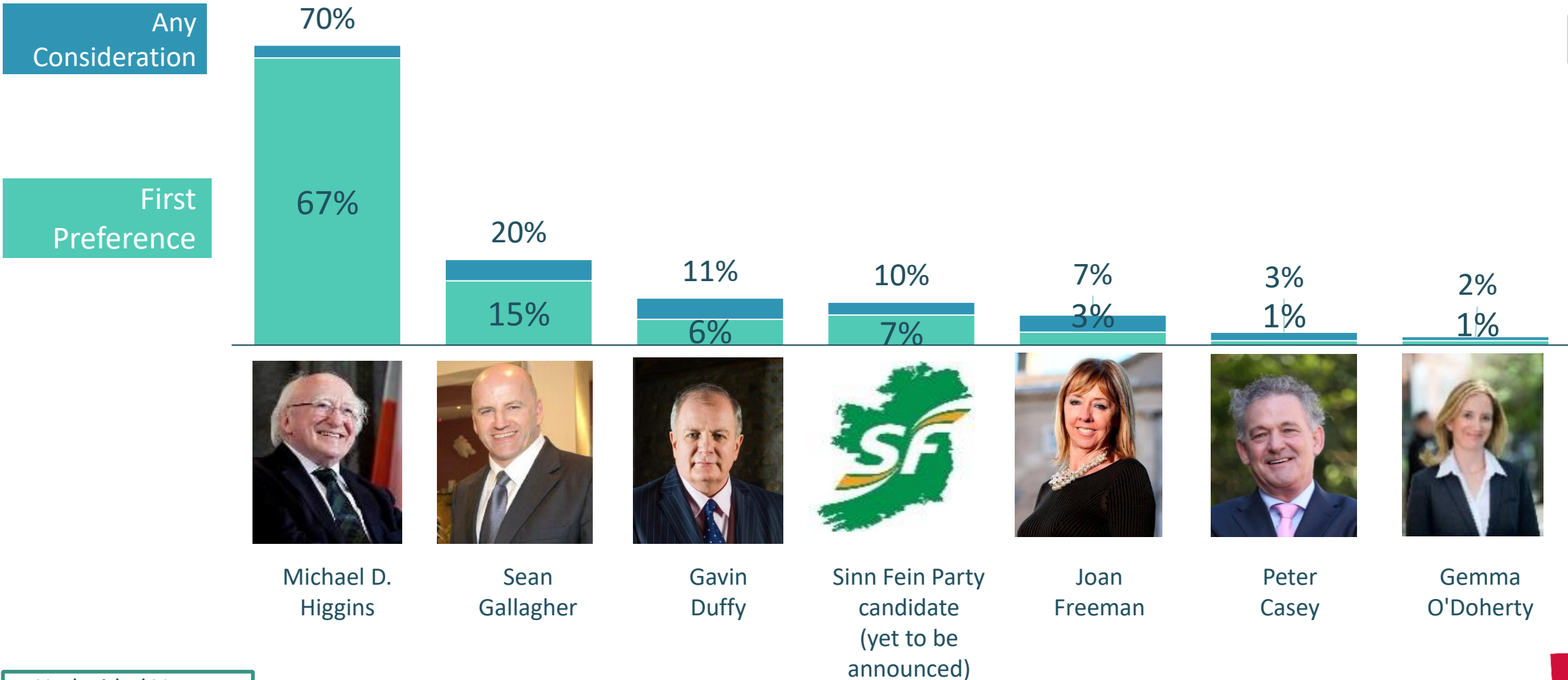
So how on earth could any sequence of events now overturn a 50%+ lead in support for the first preference vote? Particularly when you consider that he survived the last campaign, that took down so many other candidates.   Surely anything that could have been thrown at him, already has been? His support is slightly better among young voters who are less likely to vote, and slightly worse among older voters who are more likely to vote. But the impact of these younger voters not turning out, would be minimal in light of his current lead.

Over and above this Michael D. Higgins has had seven years to become the people's favourite, helped along by two photogenic dogs that even the most hard-nosed political analysts in our office still love. It seems that whatever happens in the next few weeks, Higgins position is on face value pretty unassailable.

Presidential Election – First Preference

The Presidential Election is due to take place on the 26th October 2018. a) Which of the following candidates do you think you might consider voting for in the Presidential Election?
b) Which of these candidates will you most likely give your first preference vote to in the Presidential? Election
(Base: All Irish Citizens registered and able to vote in any presidential election, n=939)

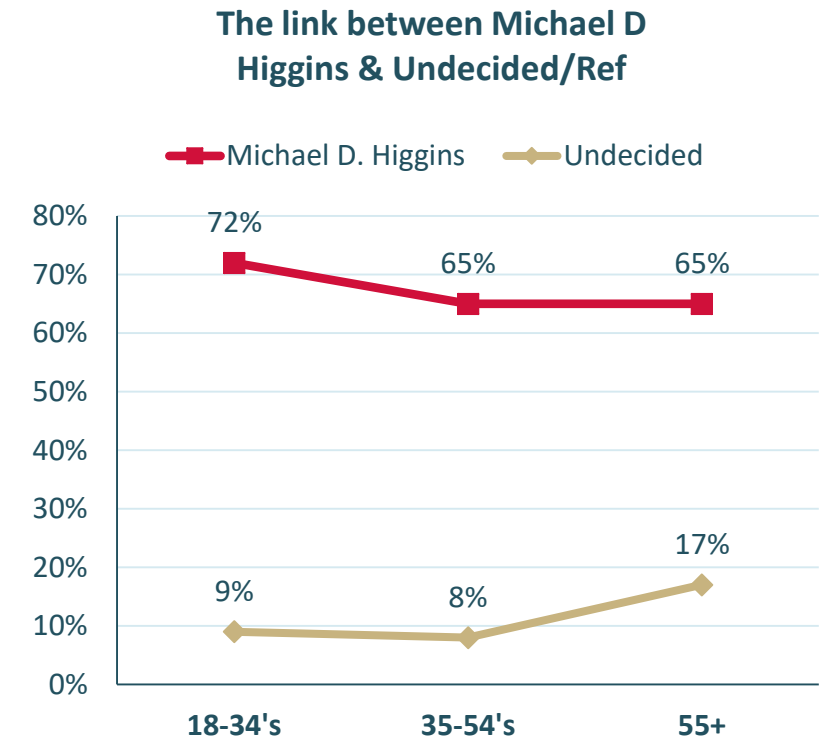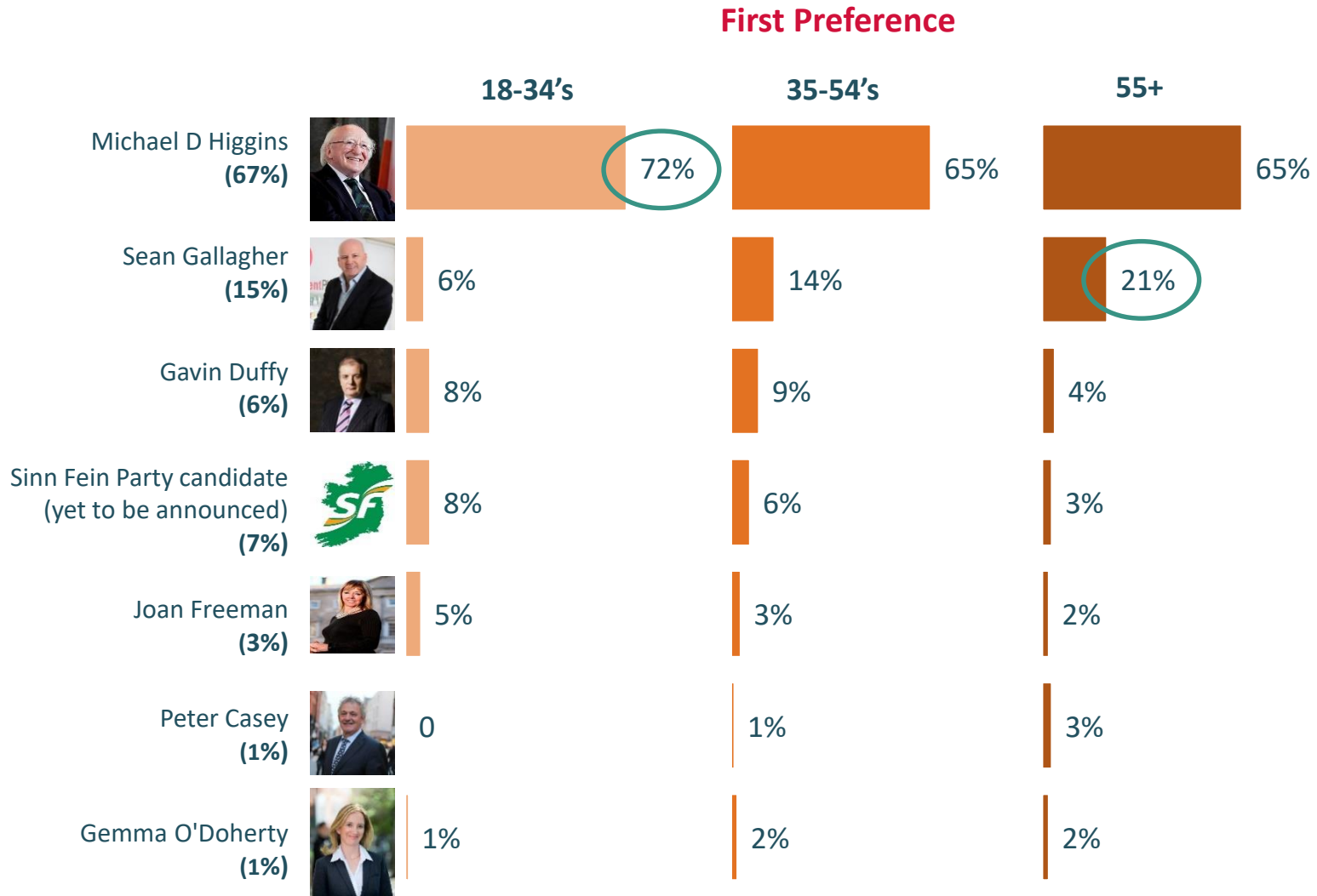|	Michael D. Higgins	Sean Gallagher	Gavin Duffy	Sinn Fein Party candidate (yet to be announced)	Joan Freeman	Peter Casey	Gemma O'Doherty
Any Consideration	70%	20%	11%	10%	7%	3%	2%
First Preference	67%	15%	6%	7%	3%	1%	1%

Undecided Voters **8%**
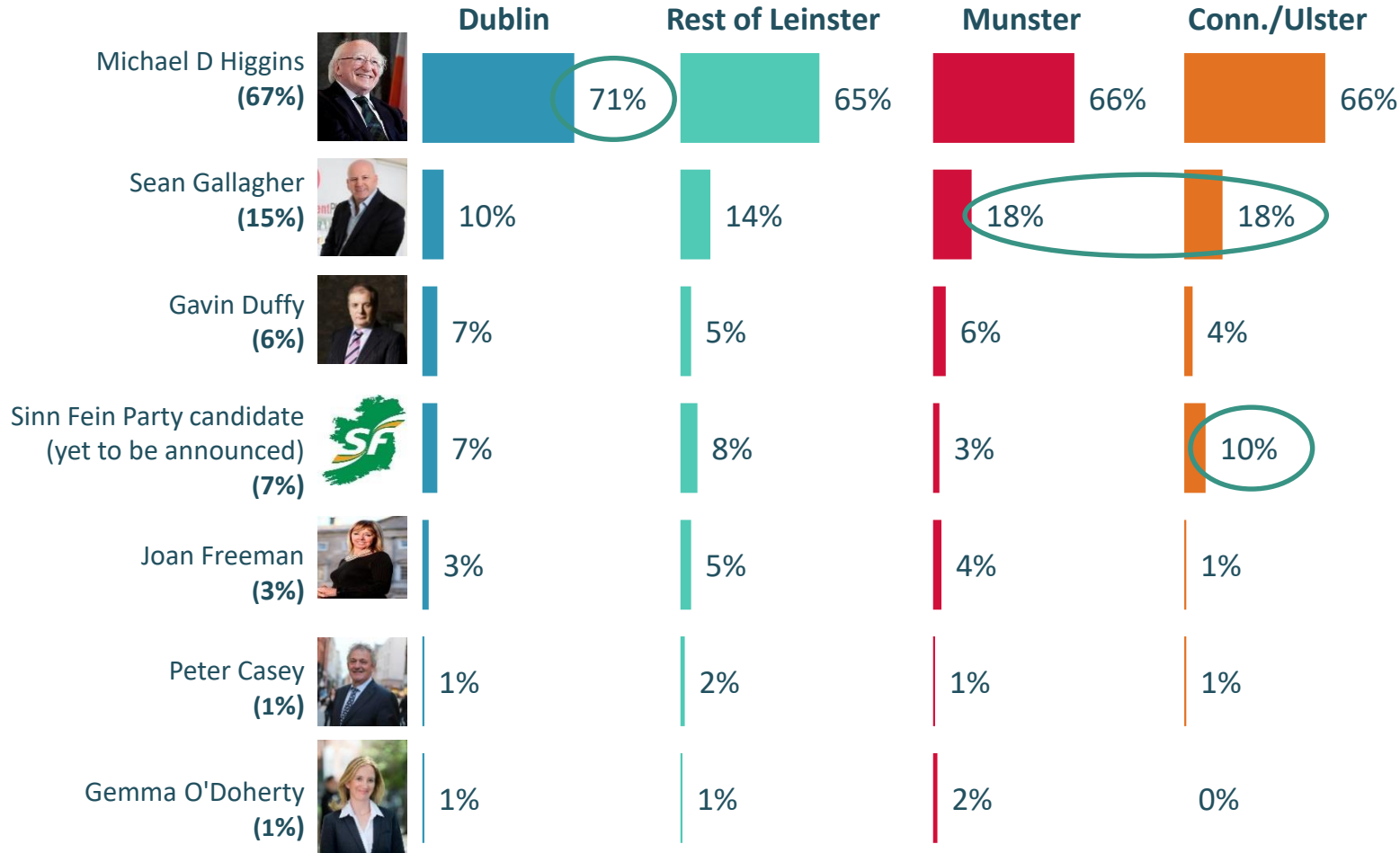
First Preference x Age

The Presidential Election is due to take place on the 26th October 2018.
a) Which of the following candidates do you think you might consider voting for in the Presidential Election?
b) Which of these candidates will you most likely give your first preference vote to in the Presidential? Election
(Base: All Irish Citizens registered and able to vote in any presidential election, n=939)

First Preference

	18-34's	35-54's	55+
Michael D Higgins (67%)	72%	65%	65%
Sean Gallagher (15%)	6%	14%	21%
Gavin Duffy (6%)	8%	9%	4%
Sinn Fein Party candidate (yet to be announced) (7%)	8%	6%	3%
Joan Freeman (3%)	5%	3%	2%
Peter Casey (1%)	0	1%	3%
Gemma O'Doherty (1%)	1%	2%	2%

The link between Michael D Higgins & Undecided/Ref

Michael D. Higgins — Undecided

	18-34's	35-54's	55+
Michael D. Higgins	72%	65%	65%
Undecided	9%	8%	17%

( ) Figures in brackets total 1st Preference

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First Preference x Region

First Preference

	Dublin	Rest of Leinster	Munster	Conn./Ulster
Michael D Higgins (67%)	71%	65%	66%	66%
Sean Gallagher (15%)	10%	14%	18%	18%
Gavin Duffy (6%)	7%	5%	6%	4%
Sinn Fein Party candidate (yet to be announced) (7%)	7%	8%	3%	10%
Joan Freeman (3%)	3%	5%	4%	1%
Peter Casey (1%)	1%	2%	1%	1%
Gemma O'Doherty (1%)	1%	1%	2%	0%

The link between Michael D Higgins & Undecided/Ref

— Michael D. Higgins   — Undecided

	Dublin	ROL	Munster	Conn./Ulster
Michael D. Higgins	71%	65%	66%	66%
Undecided	7%	8%	11%	23%

( ) Figures in brackets total 1st Preference

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First Preference x Party Preference

First Preference

	FIANNA FÁIL THE REPUBLICAN PARTY	FINE GAEL	LABOUR	SF	Independent Candidate
Michael D Higgins (67%)	56%	82%	67%	43%	60%
Sean Gallagher (15%)	25%	11%	16%	5%	20%
Gavin Duffy (6%)	11%	3%	16%	1%	10%
Sinn Fein Party candidate (yet to be announced) (7%)	2%	0%	0	46%	0%
Joan Freeman (3%)	4%	4%	0	2%	3%
Peter Casey (1%)	2%	0	0	0%	4%
Gemma O'Doherty (1%)	0	0	1%	3%	3%

The link between Michael D Higgins & Undecided/Ref

■— Michael D Higgins ◆— Undecided

	Fianna Fáil	Fine Gael	Labour	Sinn Fein	Independent Candidate
Michael D Higgins	56%	82%	67%	43%	60%
Undecided	8%	6%	2%	2%	9%

( ) Figures in brackets total 1st Preference

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THANK YOU

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