



General Election Opinion Poll

26th April 2015



Methodology and Weighting

- RED C interviewed a random sample of 1,006 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 20th – 22nd April 2015.
- 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.



Government Recovery Short-lived? - I

Last month saw the Sunday Business Post publish the RED C poll that Government strategists had been waiting for. Finally a significant uplift was seen for the government parties that appeared to suggest the public had begun to give credit to Fine Gael and Labour for the improving economic situation. Surely this was the start of the momentum back to government parties?

A month on, and instead of building on those gains, Fine Gael and Labour will be disappointed to see support slip back again. Both parties have seen support drop back by 2%, not quite wiping out the gains last month, but it certainly feels like 2 steps forward and 1 step back. So why has momentum failed to materialise for the government parties?

The first reason is the new reality of Sinn Fein.

Sinn Fein now appears able to swat away losses on the back of any controversy just a month later, the like of which hasn't been seen since Bertie Ahern was nicknamed the Teflon Taoiseach. Last month saw the party lose 4% support on the back of a significant controversy surrounding their handling of alleged sex abusers within the party. Just a month on and that support has bounced back again, leaving Sinn Fein securing 22% of the first preference vote. This is a recurring theme for the party, where it appears any scandals or misdemeanours are quickly forgotten by supporters.

The second fact to bear in mind is the speed of gains.

Last month we saw quite rapid gains for government parties, perhaps even a little bit quicker than we had expected. It appears part of this was the government doing better, but the gains were bolstered by the fact that Sinn Fein was losing support at the same time. This has now been corrected, and perhaps the much smaller gains now for the Government parties, are more realistic rate of gain that the government need to get use to.

The third factor is water charges.

It doesn't matter how much credit the government parties get for an improving economic situation, anything to do with the water charges remains pretty toxic. The past month has seen actual bills finally being sent to households. There is no question that this will have done the government no favours in the poll, as it serves as very real reminder of the costs of Water Charges, and the voter's anger about this issue. There has been much talk on social media of people sending the bills back with "unpaid" written on the envelope.

Government Recovery Short-lived? - II

This leaves the current political landscape in something of a static position. Fine Gael, while making gains in recent months, is only clawing back lost ground at the end of last year, and it appears to be a more difficult ask for them to regain support in the early 30's, last seen back in 2012.

Labour thought their troubles may be at an end, but again the drop back to 8% support also means they have plenty of work to do to secure some tight seats at the next election.

Fianna Fail appears to have hit a glass ceiling in the high teens, and simply can't creep above 20%. Sinn Fein made good gains across 2014, but in 2015 any gains or losses have been short-lived and it has been a lot more rocky a ride for the part that has meant they are also pretty stable at support in the early 20's.

In fact the only group that shows a consistent trend in recent months is the Independent and other party grouping. Support has been exceptionally high for these candidates and other parties throughout late 2014 and early 2015, but now it appears people are somewhat less convinced about casting their vote for these parties and candidates. The Green Party in particular appear to have lost some support, but all the smaller parties such as the Socialist party (less than 1%) and Renua (1%) are struggling to make a mark.

This is coupled with an increase in those who are now undecided as to how they will vote. Undecided voters have been at relatively low levels throughout 2014/2015 at around 14%. Today sees this figure rise to 17% of all likely voters. With Sinn Fein securing support at relatively high levels, and Independent support quite low, one conclusion is that those now unsure of how they vote are being torn between voting Independent or voting for Government parties. This is based on the fact that such a large cohort of those that have been suggesting they would vote for Independent candidates, previously voted for the government parties.

So maybe losses for Government parties this month are not quite as bad when taken into context of the Water Bills delivery, and the fact that there is potential to win those undecided voters back.

First Preference Vote Intention – April 2015

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
25% -2

Labour
8% -2

Fianna Fail
19% +1

Sinn Fein
22% +5

Independent/
Other
26% -2

Undecided Voters
17% +4



First Preference Vote Intention – April 2015

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)

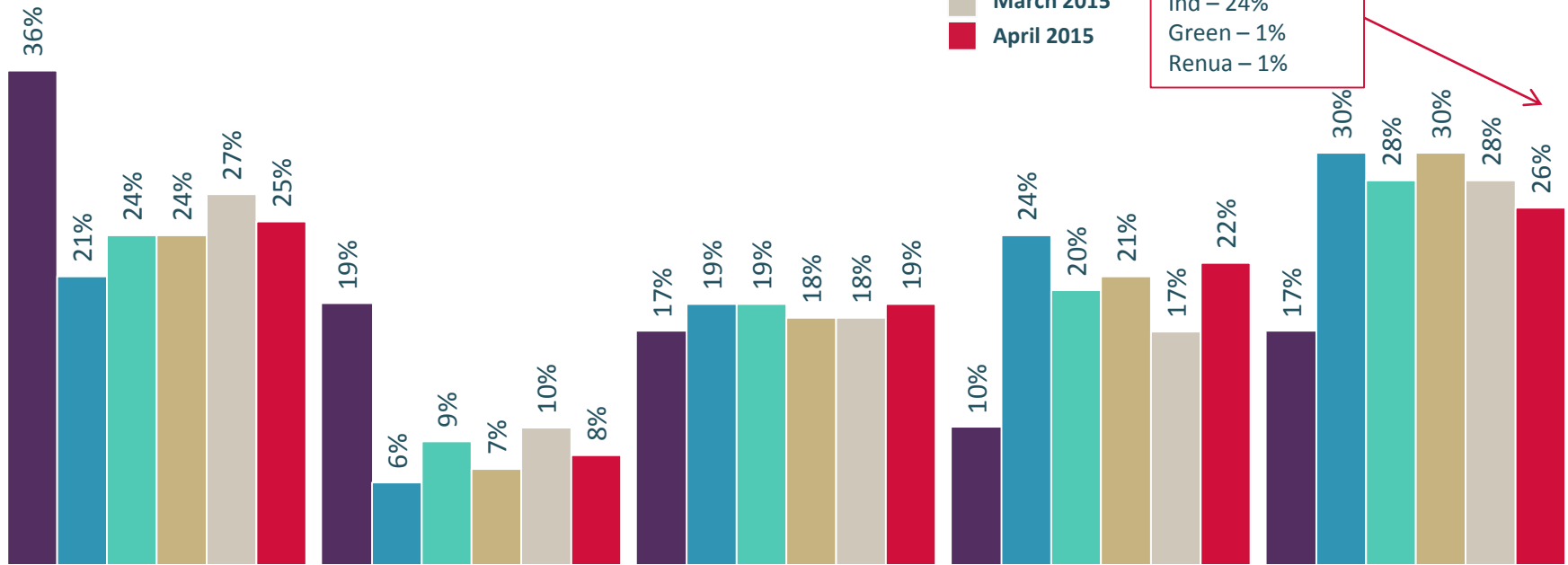
(Base: All adults 18+)

CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT					
	Core figures	Impact of Past vote weighting	Likely Voters	Excluding Undecided	2011 Election Results
	%	%	%	%	%
Fine Gael	20	20	21	25	36
Labour	6	6	7	8	19
Fianna Fáil	14	15	15	19	17
Sinn Féin	20	19	18	22	10
Independent candidates	18	18	20	24	13
Green Party	1	1	1	1	2
Renua	1	1	1	1	n/a
Socialist Party	*	*	*	*	1
Other Party	*	1	*	*	1
Undecided	20	19	17		

First Preference Vote Intention – Dec 2014 – April 2015

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
25%

Labour
8%

Fianna Fail
19%

Sinn Fein
22%

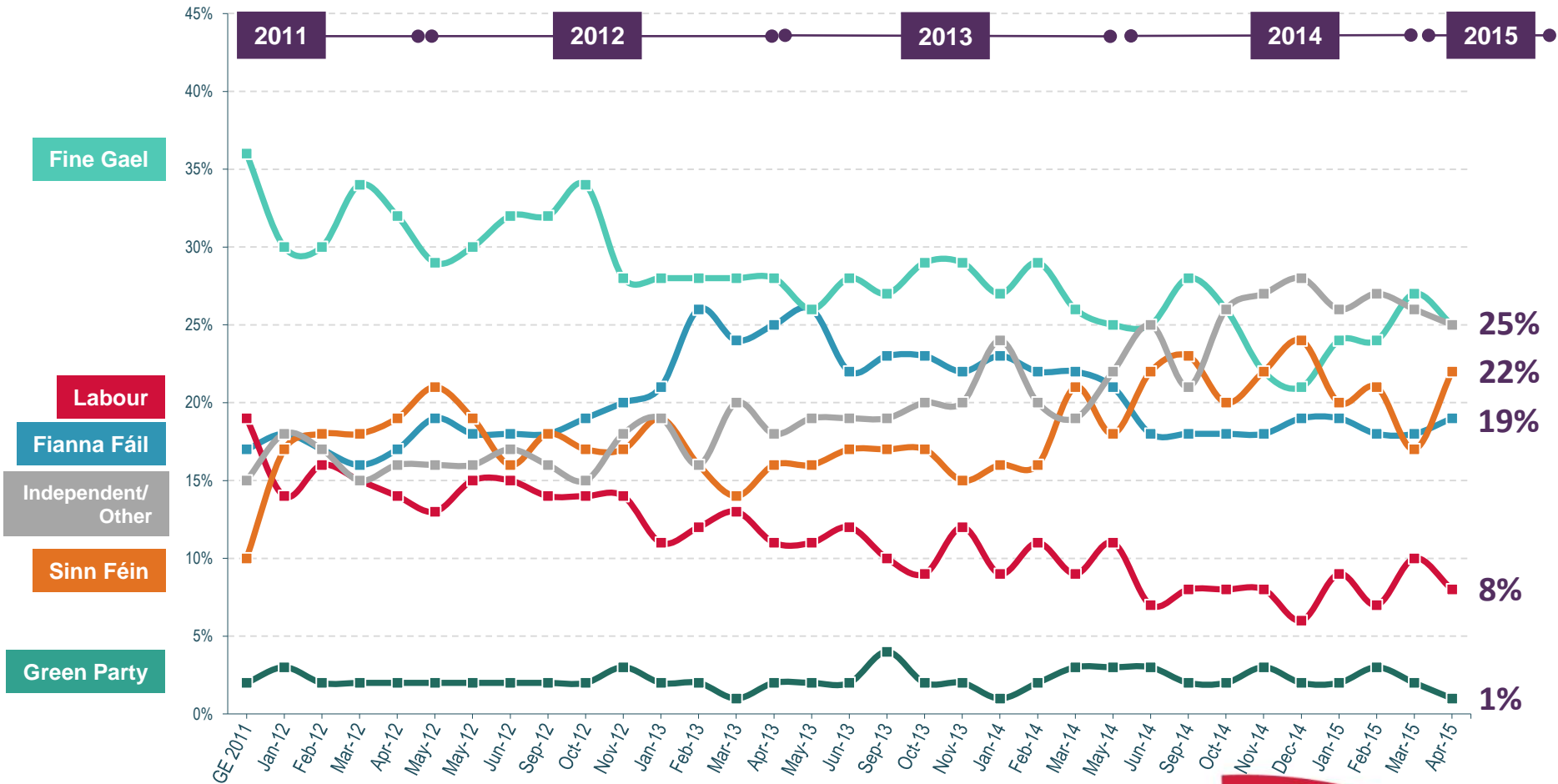
Independent/
Other
26%



First Preference Vote Intention – 2011-2015

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 2015

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)

