



# General Election Opinion Poll

26<sup>th</sup> January 2014



**REDC**

# Methodology and Weighting



- RED C interviewed a random sample of 1,009 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2014.
- 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.
- Finally, some people tell RED C that they intend to vote, and have a good past voting record, but say they don't know who they would vote for or refuse to answer the question. Whenever such people say which party they voted for in the last two elections (2011 and 2007), RED C ascribe 25% to the party they voted for previously at each election. We have seen from analysis of past elections that this is the most likely outcome and this reallocation tries to overcome the effect of the “spiral of silence” where voters are do not want to admit who they will vote for.
- In all respects the poll was completed to the opinion polling guidelines set out by both ESOMAR and AIMRO.

# Independent Candidates the Antidote to the Party machine

The good times didn't last very long for the government parties, with gains seen following the exit from the bailout mechanism short lived in the face of day to day politics. Instead, it appears vote intention is being heavily swayed by the "Shane Ross effect", where Independent TDs (in particular characterised by Shane Ross and his extensive coverage in the media) standing up against perceived greed and cronyism seen in payments to charities board members and spend at government quangos such as Irish Water.

Evidence of this is seen in the poll with record levels of support for Independent candidates, while levels of undecided voters decline. A quarter of all likely voters (25%) now say they will vote for Independent candidates and non-mainstream parties. This is 3% higher than recorded in the last poll in December, and represents the highest level of support for this group ever seen. In fact support has risen for Independent candidates by 10% since the last general election.

Some have suggested that this rise in support for Independent candidates, coupled with a rise in undecided voters, clearly represents the desire among voters for a new party. At the same time when asked directly, it does appear that quite a large chunk of voters are open to a new party, which could be read as a green light for those contemplating setting one up.

But further evidence from this poll, suggests it is perhaps a bit more complicated than simply setting a new party up and waiting for the voters to flock to it. For a start, the levels of undecided voters has in fact declined in today's poll, down to 16% from 19% in December last year. This suggests that voters like what they are seeing from Independent candidates, rather than they are simply supporting them as they don't know which party to vote for.

At the same time the number of voters currently nominating any of the possible groups or new parties being discussed as potential new entrants to the Irish Political landscape is very low. In order to measure the impact of various groups that may or have formed new parties, we provided the option in today's poll to record any support mentioned for Reform Alliance, Direct Democracy, United Left Alliance and the newly formed National Independent Party. However, none of these groups, or other parties such as the Socialist Party or Green Party receive any significant level of support at all in this poll.

# Independent candidates the antidote to the Party machine

Despite a significant level of coverage in the media, the Reform Alliance is not mentioned by a single voter in the survey as their first preference choice. To be fair they have made clear that as yet they are not a party, but rather a collection of like minded Independents, and as such possible support for the party may well be higher and hidden among support for Independent candidates. But at the same time the lack direct mentions for any of these groups, despite significant media coverage in the past month, is interesting in itself.

The issue for any new party, is that for a significant chunk of voters who currently support Independent candidates, the party system is seen to be part of the problem. They have changed who they have supported to bring about a change in government, but have been disillusioned to see basically the same politics being borne out. Being able to clearly separate any new parties image and persona, from the way that things have been done in other more established parties is crucial to its success, for those that see the party system as engendering cronyism.

The other problem is that those who support Independent candidates are not a homogenous group, but rather they have very different beliefs and views. It is relatively easy for people with different beliefs, to support an individual candidate to ensure they act as a guard against mainstream parties getting away with things. It is quite another step to change that to support a party, which comes with a clear set of aspirations and beliefs, that may well not match the voters.

To put it more simply, it appears that voters support individual Independent candidates, because they are seen to stand up for the individual against the machine. A party by its nature, is part of the machine.

# First Preference Vote Intention – Jan 2014

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 and adjusted for Spiral of Silence)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote )



Fine Gael  
**27%** -2

Labour  
**9%** -3

Fianna Fail  
**23%** +1

Sinn Fein  
**16%** +1

Independent/  
Other  
**25%** +3

Undecided Voters  
**16%** -4



# First Preference Vote Intention – Jan 2014

*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 and adjusted for Spiral of Silence)*

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

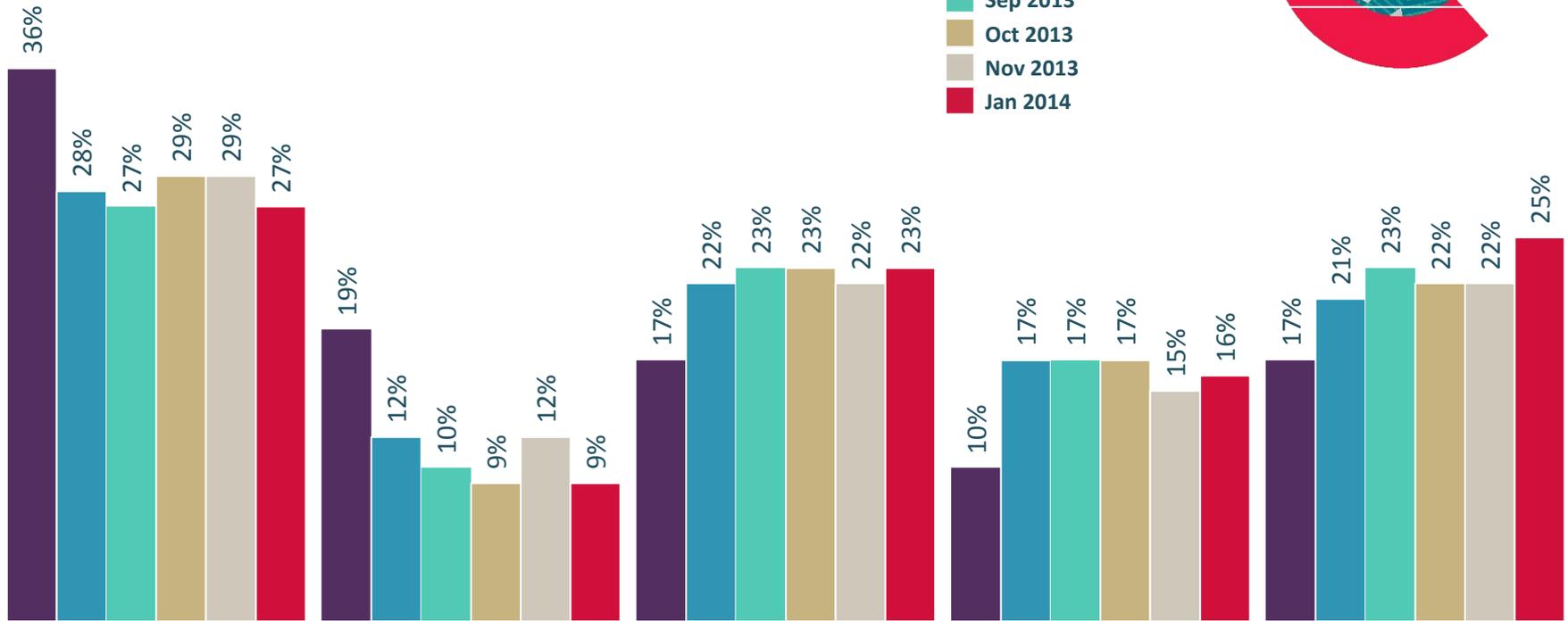
## CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT AMONG THOSE LIKELY TO VOTE

|                        | Core figures<br>26 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2014 | Excluding 50%<br>undecided, and<br>weighting back 50%<br>undecided to how they<br>voted in past elections | 2011 Election Results |
|------------------------|---|---|-----------------------|
|                        | %   | %   | %                     |
| Fine Gael              | 22  | 27  | 36                    |
| Labour                 | 7   | 9   | 19                    |
| Fianna Fáil            | 18  | 23  | 17                    |
| Sinn Féin              | 15  | 16  | 10                    |
| Independent candidates | 21  | 24  | 13                    |
| Green Party            | 1   | 1   | 2                     |
| Socialist Party        | *   | *   | 1                     |
| Other Party            | *   | *   | 1                     |
| Undecided              | 16  |   |                       |

# First Preference Vote Intention – June 2013 – Jan 2014

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 and adjusted for Spiral of Silence)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



Fine Gael  
**27%**

Labour  
**9%**

Fianna Fail  
**23%**

Sinn Fein  
**16%**

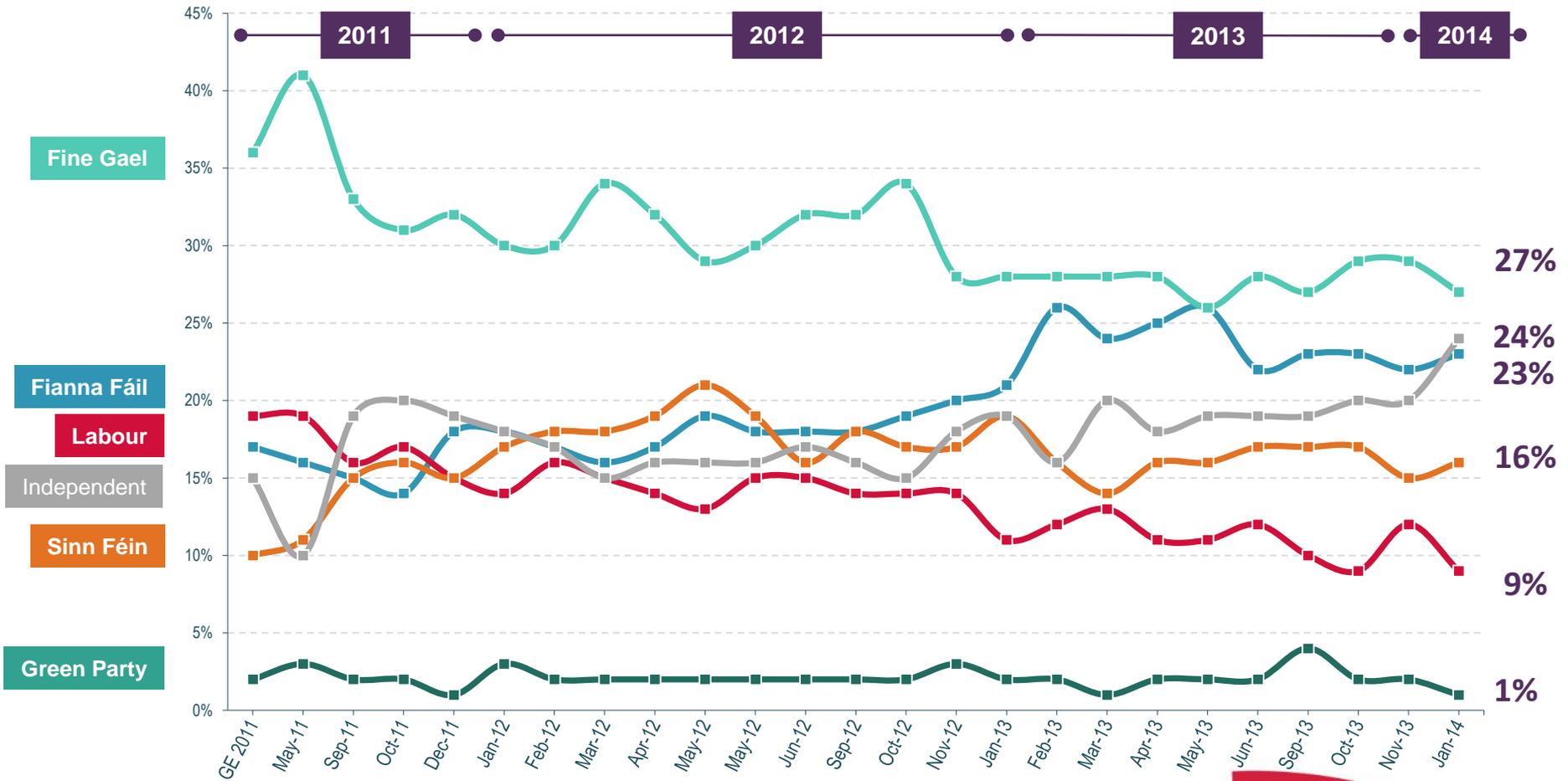
Independent/  
Other  
**25%**



# First Preference Vote Intention – 2011-2014

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 and adjusted for Spiral of Silence)

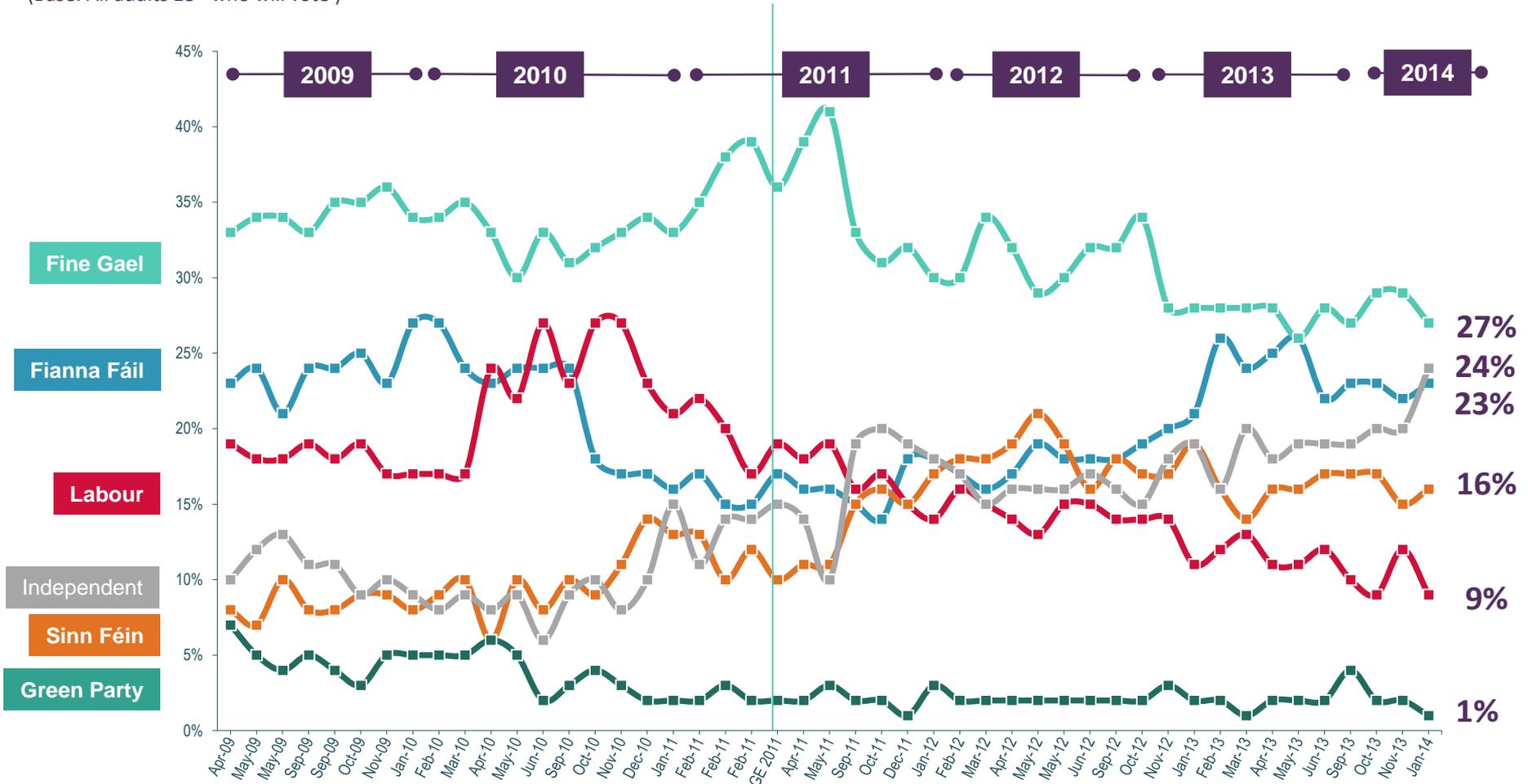
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote )



# First Preference Vote Intention – 2009-2014

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 and adjusted for Spiral of Silence)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote )



# First Preference Vote Intention – 2006 to 2014

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 and adjusted for Spiral of Silence)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote )

